

A-Team Conference Call Minutes 11/04/04

Welcome and Introductions Present: John Sullivan, Terry Dukerschien, Bob Hrabik, Valarie Barko, Janet Sternburg, TJ Miller, Mark Pegg, Kevin Stauffer, Walt Popp, Dan Kirby, John Pitlo, Mike Steuck, Dave Moller, Dan Wilcox, Hank De Hann, Roger Perk, Marvin Hubbell, Rob Mayher, John Chick, Mark Pegg, Linda Leake, Pat Hegland, Barry Johnson, Jennie Sauer, Bob Gaugush, Pete Redmon, Tim Yaeger

Approve Minutes from July Meeting Janet Sternburg moved we approve them as submitted. John Pitlo seconded. Pete Redmond asked for a copy and John Sullivan will send it.

Update on LTRM Restructuring Since last EMPCC meeting, Roger Perk sent out 3 separate e-mails including all the pieces we are working on. State reps from EMPCC have a conference call tomorrow and the Corps and UMESC will join in on the latter half (Roger Perk and Linda Leake) and discuss any concerns the states have. Roger knows nothing more about funding for FY05. There is a lot of pressure among large ecosystem programs throughout the country that we didn't have before. Corps needs input on APE list to recommend to EMPCC and the Status and Trends Outline—needs by next week to compile for EMPCC.

John Sullivan asked about the Oct. 29 e-mail package—what's meant by the 3rd period of fish sampling dropped. Roger said the recommendation was “no less than 2 periods.” Wording is incorrect—one of 3 periods will be dropped. Does Analysis Team need to make a recommendation on which period should be dropped? Barry Johnson said the staffing plan assumes 2nd and 3rd periods. Are field station leaders comfortable with that? WI, yes. Southern ones, not so comfortable—not able in analyses to find good evidence 1st time period more variable than others. Barry Johnson said we need to maintain continuity throughout program with same time periods. Iowa—and MN—common sense to drop 1st period because 1st period overlaps with intense vegetation and water quality sampling. John Chick asked if they would be allowed to do 3 periods if staff and time were available. Barry said 3 periods of fish for 3 lower field stations would require more money, but Mark Pegg pointed out not much of a cost difference.

There was consensus that A-Team should weigh in on the fish monitoring periods now. Field staffs are available, but will they be doing other works that have not been defined? Until we define what APE's we'll be doing and what reports are planned, it's hard to say. What are we giving up as far as analyses? USGS indicated the staffing plan is based on the number of people to accomplish the desired task. Sullivan suggested A-Team provide a recommendation to keep the same 2 time periods system-wide, but explore further if we can get the first period back on the table for the lower field stations. Roger asked if it was added back, would it reduce analysis time?

John Chick indicated it depended on what else they would be asked to do. John Sullivan clarified that Roger was saying adding a third period had to come from APE dollars, not MSP dollars. The baseline we're at right now is 2 fish sampling periods – 2nd and 3rd. Bob Hrabik thought with overhead and fringe it would cost \$10-\$11 K to add the first sampling period back in.

John Chick said once we have analyses in MSP and APE figured out, 3 lower field station team leaders will talk with a rep. from UMESC regarding including the 3rd period.

LTRMP Budget for FY05 - In response to a question about the equipment refreshment of \$56K, the corps clarified that to balance the budget for this year, the equipment refreshment would come out of APE dollars.

Janet Sternburg wondered why statistical support increased to 0.61 FTE in the final budget. Linda said stat support is 0.5 at UMESC (Pat Heglund was added as lead in Science support) and also at field stations. Linda Leake said they cut some science support and redistributed into a more appropriate area (moved from administration—it was like a team leader.) John Pitlo suggested decreasing this to 0.25 FTE and move the money saved to get 3rd period of fish. Linda Leake pointed out that it doesn't meet the objective as a program- a need for both analysis and monitoring. Roger Perk pointed out the program for several years had been criticized for not completing more reports and analyses. It's a high priority to have the analysis there at both UMESC and field stations. Sullivan indicated the previous A-Team discussion on this matter was to recommend .25-.5 FTE at UMESC (i.e. Brian Grey's position). Sullivan also thought that the report delays were more related to editorial staff reductions at UMESC. Linda Leake did not agree with this.

John Pitlo recommended lowering statistical support at UMESC to 0.25 FTE. Jeff Houser commented that to the extent that if Brian Grey's participation is reduced it will reduce overall productivity towards analysis and publication. Most states suggested 0.25 FTE for stat support. Pete Redmon, EPA, agreed with states. Tim Yeager, USFWS, indicated that if we drop to 0.25, the savings be reflected in APE dollars rather than sampling. Yeager and Sullivan didn't believe 0.25 was enough and supported 0.5 FTE. Roger Perk said a past criticism was that we lacked a statistician, so we asked UMESC to go out and get a good statistician. The corps feels that additional 0.25 FTE is well worth having.

Roger said \$3.64 million was locked in concrete for FY05 for the MSP as agreed at last EMPCC meeting. It would be indexed over 5 years with 4.1% inflation. There are hardly any APE \$ at the outset. Taking out the additional equipment refreshment was the last piece we needed to get to the \$3.64 million, Perk said. Perk suggested talking with your EMPCC member for the discussion tomorrow. From Analysis Team perspective, we don't have much control on the total budget and it needs to be raised to a higher level, Sullivan concluded. We won't know for a few months what the FY05 allocation is. John Chick asked why the budget for WQ at USGS in 02 was not as high as 05 when we have reduced. Linda Leake suggested she and John have a discussion. John Chick will send an e-mail around with the information and questions.

Status and Trends Outline Hank De Haan provided background information. Bob Gaugush covered some of the details and logistics. The report will update the status and trends of UMRS and also show how LTRMP is being used for adaptive management of the system. An important goal of the report will be to define endpoints (i.e. environmental indicators). The report will concentrate on LTRMP data, but will use

hydrology and information on other major drivers. There will be a one-page discussion on each endpoint and the overall report will be about 100 pages in length. The last data increment will include monitoring data up through 2003. The 1998 S&T report concentrated on conditions for ecosystem health. This report will focus on endpoints that will show how LTRMP can be used to manage the system. It will be a multi-agency effort. The plan is to start with initial set of indicators identified by Nav Study Science Panel and expand/define from there. Recent indicators developed for the Great Lakes provide a useful reference for what is intended to be accomplished for the river. Bob is expecting to identify endpoints by early January 2005. The target completion date for the report is September 05. Hank will follow-up with questions and answers and URLs to access the NAV Study document.

Bob Gaugush indicated the Great Lakes 2001 Report provides a good example of the level of detail that is planned. He will provide the web link to this report. Bob and Hank indicated they plan to ask for A-Team and EMPCC input on the identification of the endpoints. John Sullivan asked that A-Team members provide their comments on the draft outline by November 12th. He then will compile and send them to UMESC and the Corps prior to the EMPCC meeting.

Planned Additional Program Elements (APE) Work for FY 05 - The final version came out on November 1, 2004. The corps just got a last-minute request via UMESC from Missouri. The cost estimates are very rough. The A-Team was asked to prioritize these projects. Roger Perk reviewed the sideboards for how we look at these APE dollars. They need to support the status and trends report and reflect how LTRM has led to a better understanding of the river. The APEs need to relate to the operating plan and to provide a better linkage with HREP and river management needs. Lastly, priority projects or analyses identified in the 10-year reports should be considered.

Equipment refreshment is still in the loop. Combining water quality and vegetation does not look feasible. Water Quality Component and Macroinvertebrate Evaluation are in MSP. The 10-yr component reports are all in the editorial hopper right now. Linda Leake will share a schedule on those next week.

Sullivan asked if members wished to prioritize the APEs – are we ready to proceed? MO and FWS had their priorities. MN had not prioritized, but would do so by tomorrow. EPA had not done it. IA would have med, low, and high done tomorrow. Illinois also. John Sullivan used a numerical prioritization process. He used the Corps sideboards as well as additional criteria. Sullivan asked if there were questions about specific APE projects.

Is this a living document? Based previous A-Team comments, Sullivan said Status and Trends Report and Bathymetry jumped out as high priority, but they cost so much they would consume all the APE dollars. Sullivan didn't think it would be our recommendation to spend all APE \$ on Bathymetry. Janet asked if projects could be done over 2 or 3 years. Roger said at the end of one year, there has to be deliverable products. Pat Heglund added that the projects with asterisk were those that could be broken out over a number of years with separate products each year. Bathymetry is the total amount. Not broken out in individual paragraphs of what the accomplishments

would be, but there is a footnote that projects could be broken out over more than one year.

Janet asked if there were dollars associated with maintenance of the hydrology data. Barry Johnson said it is an additional increment. This project would automate the procedures used to collect hydro data. John Sullivan mentioned flow as an important factor for the water quality component, and it is not an item that has been identified as a need. Flow data needs to be incorporated into the LTRM WQ database. Barry said this proposal collects those data and it likely could be merged into the water quality database. The development of the automation is a one-time deal, Pat Heglund clarified. Pete Redmon added it's really a critical thing to get the flow data incorporated somehow.

John Sullivan asked if Bathmetry always had to come out of LTRM funding if HREP uses it, too. Roger said for the most part it is considered a systemic issue and all those systemic things have been a part of LTRM. Janet Sternburg suggested those projects that might get assistance from our partners might be looked at as having higher priority. However, we don't know that now, John and Pete pointed out.

Sullivan indicated it was a rush to go through the APE prioritization and didn't have time to go through it with individual state managers.

Pete Redmon said invasives were of interest in EPA, but they were still at the very beginning of the process.

John Sullivan—does the corps feel Status and Trends Report is important, and if yes, why do we have to rank it? Perk, UMESC replied it is already going forward. Leake indicated the cost estimate for this activity was very rough.

A-Team members were asked to finish their prioritization. Sullivan will send out a spreadsheet to all A-Team members to facilitate this process. He also asked that members provide a general description on what criteria were used to rank the projects. Sullivan will compile the responses and provide to UMESC and the Corps for November EMPCC meeting

Time/Place for next A-Team meeting

Roger Perk suggested late January to provide more time between A-Team meeting and the February EMPCC meeting. It was suggested to meet during the 3rd week January. Sullivan will confirm date with future e-mail.